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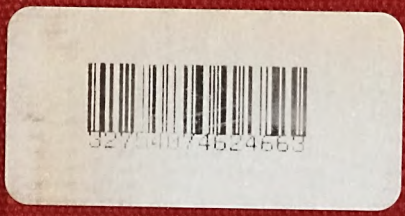

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BULLETIN OF THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Edited by

H. J. CHAYTOR

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CONTENTS

PAGE

TEXTS AND THE MAN (C. Brown) - - - 97

QUARTERLY NOTES - - - - - 112

INQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS - - - 113

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED - - - - 114

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TEXTS AND THE MAN

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS GIVEN IN LONDON, JUNE 30, 1928

As members of an Association which, by its very title, is committed to Research, we have doubtless asked ourselves from time to time toward what ultimate goal our researches should be directed. And the question once raised will not, I think, be found so simple as it may at first appear.

"Modern Humanities" was intended, I suppose, as a restrictive designation which should exclude from our field the study of the ancient languages and the classics—though this term does not logically exclude the living languages of Oriental nations.

But exactly what are "the humanities"? Etymologically considered, the term would seem to include the entire domain of knowledge outside the sacred precincts of divinity. Accordingly, the student in this field might well adopt as his motto the often quoted sentence of Terence:

Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienam puto.

Usage, however, has given the term a somewhat more definite meaning. "Humanity," as defined in the *New English Dictionary*, "appears to have represented L. *humanitas* in the sense of 'mental cultivation befitting a man, liberal education,' as used by Aulus Gellius, Cicero, and others; hence, taken as equivalent to 'literary culture, polite literature, *literæ humaniores*'; but it was very often, in scholastic and academic use, opposed to *divinity*, as if equivalent to secular learning." The humanities, from this point of view, include those branches of knowledge which deal with human affairs and interests, as opposed to abstract studies such as mathematics or the physical sciences.

But even when so regarded, one sees that there is ample room

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for exploration—within the circle of the humanities would be philosophy, history (which, if extended into prehistoric times, is distinguished as anthropology), the linguistic sciences, literature and the fine arts, and finally the study of social institutions. In a word, the humanities would include everything relating to man in his social, intellectual, and artistic activities. Nor is this a purely theoretical classification. A few years ago in the United States a group of academic societies which were outside the pale of the physical sciences and felt, perhaps, some sense of isolation, associated themselves together as a council of learned societies in the field of the humanities. Among the group were the Historical Association, the Archæological Institute, the Economic Association, the Political Science Association, the Sociological Association, the Philosophical Association, the Mediæval Academy, the Philological Association, the Modern Language Association, the Oriental Society, and the Linguistic Society. And this group of fifteen societies is organized as "The American Council of Learned Societies Devoted to Humanistic Studies."

Such an extension of the term "humanistic," however, though justifiable on etymological grounds, is inconvenient for practical purposes because it is not sufficiently definite; and, in the case of the American Council just referred to, I note that a recent report of the work of these societies is published under the title "Research in the Humanistic *and Social* Sciences."

If we recognize a group division into the humanistic and the social sciences, it is clear that political economy, political science and sociology will range themselves in one group, and the several departments of philology and literature in the other group, while history and philosophy will occupy a neutral position less easily defined, with lines of communication leading in either direction. Philosophy, for example, builds its foundations upon the classics as represented by Plato and Aristotle. The great philosopher of the golden mean has left us classic treatises on Poetics as well as on Ethics; but in so far as Philosophy interests itself in Ethics, the science of human obligations and relationships, it is manifestly allied with the social sciences as well as the humanities.

Again, the province of history is one which in itself is almost limitless. No historian conceives of his task as merely that of a chronicler of events; he undertakes to trace the growth of institutions, he must also deal with the phases of culture exhibited by races and nations. Such historians as Gibbon and Lecky survey a much wider field than that of political organization. Gibbon not only traced the steps in the fall of the Roman Empire, but undertook to explain its causes; and Lecky by the very title of his *History of Rationalism* showed that his concern was with ideas

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quite as much as with events, and that he was endeavouring to sketch a philosophy of history.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to illustrate the perplexities which beset any attempt to define the field of humanities, and I have no neat and well-ordered classification to propose. Human knowledge refuses to be charted into definite zones.

The difficulties of classification, some one may reply, have to do chiefly with questions of terminology. Why, then, may we not give over this attempt to define terms and accept the humanities for practical purposes as including the field of the languages and literatures, or, in the case of our own Association, the *modern* languages and literatures?

I have no desire to quarrel over the use of terms, but I doubt whether it will be found such a simple matter to determine even the essential scope and content of our field. The study of *literæ humaniores*—even if for convenience we restrict the reference to the study of literature—can hardly be pursued apart from investigations involving technical and highly specialized researches. In most of the universities at the present time we find "Departments of Romance Languages and Literatures," English Language and Literature, etc. In other words, the study of literature is in almost every instance yoked with the study of linguistics. Poetry has from of old been accorded a place among the arts; linguistics, on the other hand, is properly a science. And our departments of language and literature necessarily represent a fusion—if not a confusion!—of the artistic and the scientific method. Some linguistic discipline, it goes without saying, is necessary for the understanding of literature written in a foreign tongue; but the grammatical discipline needful for the intelligent reading of foreign texts is after all only the introduction to linguistics. Also, the serious study of linguistics must include a knowledge of phonetics, which in turn is based upon physiological researches as to the position of the vocal organs in the process of articulation.

Nor does linguistics confine itself to the scientific study of present-day speech. The philologist proceeds to investigate its history, collecting and classifying documents which illustrate dialectal variations, and tracing them back to their archaic forms in Old High German, Old English, Old French, etc. On the basis of these data he attempts finally to construct the history of these languages in their relation to the parent speeeh of the Indo-European family.

Let no one imagine that I am endeavouring to minimize the value or the importance of linguistic study. Few among the sciences did more during the nineteenth century to widen the boundaries of knowledge. The philologists by their researches

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have explored vast provinces in human history where historical records do not exist. The history of speech has given the clue when documents and inscriptions failed. It was in the eighteenth century that Cowper wrote humorously of

> learned philologists, who chase
> The panting syllable through time and space,
> Start it at home and hunt it in the dark
> Through Greece and Rome and into Noah's Ark.

But that was before Grimm or Max-Müller or Eduard Sievers. It is doubtful if Cowper would treat the philologists so flippantly if he were writing today.

It is not, I repeat, my intention or desire to depreciate the value of philological research; my purpose is, rather, to call attention to the significant fact that, whatever its original impulses, the serious study of humane letters—I prefer this term to *belles lettres*, as corresponding to the classical *literæ humaniores*—necessarily brings with it specialized research in branches of knowledge as exact in method and technical in character as those of the physical sciences.

Suppose we undertake, for example—to speak in concrete terms—to study the text of an Anglo-Saxon epic or of *Sir Gawain* and *Pearl*. The path along which we must proceed cannot be opened until the philologist has done a vast amount of spade-work to give us firm ground for our feet. The intricacies of dialect must be penetrated before the date or provenance of our texts can be accurately determined. Indeed, it would seem that specialization begets further specialization; for the philologist himself must from time to time invoke the assistance of his fellow-expert, the palæographer, to pass judgment on the date of manuscripts. For with the constant enlargement of knowledge one new tract after another is being marked off and reserved for occupation by the specialist, and the wayfarer is everywhere warned by the owners of these premises that if he enters upon them he does so at his own risk!

In the study of earlier literature, it will doubtless be granted, we must rely for guidance upon the philologist and the palæographer; but as soon as we emerge from the mediæval thickets into the open fields of modern literature it might be expected that we could take leave of the specialist and wander at our own fancy. With the invention of printing we no longer need to trouble ourselves over the dating of manuscripts—we need only turn to the colophon or the title-page.

The case, indeed, is altered, but I doubt whether it is much improved; for the palæographer, in taking leave of us, delivers us

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into the hands of the bibliographer. The result is that, instead of comparing manuscripts, we must collate editions, not omitting to note minute typographical differences which might betray the fact that the type suffered alteration in the course of printing the same edition. Moreover, there are unsuspected pitfalls in the path; for it has been shown that printers were not always honest, but sometimes placed false dates on the title-pages. It may be necessary, then, to scrutinize the woodcuts under a glass in the effort to determine which was the earlier state of a cut which was used for more than one edition or even for more than one book. Also, the watermarks in the paper must be examined and their history studied, for often it is by this means that the ostensible date of a book can be established or refuted. The minute detail and technical knowledge displayed in recent studies on the quartos and folios of Shakspere will serve as an impressive illustration of the degree of specialization into which bibliographical research has developed.

With respect to the literature of more recent times, bibliography has not as yet employed this method of microscopic examination. On the other hand, in recent times there has been such a vast increase in the volume of books and critical studies that the student is almost overwhelmed by its bulk. The labour of the bibliographer in this period resolves itself into a never-ending task of cataloguing innumerable books and periodicals, and woe to the scholar who ventures to erect a monument of learning without first carefully examining the bibliographical foundations! Last year there was published in England an important study for which its author had been gathering material for half a century; but it appears he had become so absorbed in gaining a first-hand acquaintance with his materials that he had failed to take sufficient note of the researches of others, and so the reviewer pronounces judgment upon his results: "The book has no bibliography. . . . The book is an excellent illustration of the truth that (it) is impossible to write a good history of prose fiction nowadays without dependence upon the labours of other scholars."

So voluminous has scholarly production become in our day, with the multiplication of books and journals, that even to keep pace with it—to say nothing of adding to it—involves labour almost as tedious as the critical study of classical or mediæval texts. And yet bibliography, no less than philology or palæography, though it may be in itself an inhuman thing, must be recognized as an aid rather than an encumbrance to the humanities, for without it errors would repeat themselves and scholarship would move in circles. We must have painstaking collations of editions, the scrutiny of watermarks, the microscopic comparison

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of woodcuts and printers' devices, and all the rest of it, if we are to rest our study of literature on a secure basis of fact.

The point which I am endeavouring to illustrate—very likely with unnecessary detail—is that the progress of study in the humanities involves at almost every step investigations in special fields in which the method is similar to that pursued in the laboratories of science. In fact, it may be said that the humanities themselves have created a group of new sciences. The student of phonetics, for example, now experiments with human articulation, adopting the methods of the physical laboratory, recording the vibrations of the sound-waves just as one would record the waves of electricity during an atmospheric disturbance. By studying the physical basis of human speech, however, he is able to throw new light upon the problems of rhythm and pitch and accent which underlie music and poetry.

It is possible, on the other hand, for investigation in any one of these special fields to become, not a means to an end, but an end in itself. It is possible to become so absorbed in research upon a text as to forget the man who wrote it or the purpose for which it was written. Particularly is this true of the earlier monuments transmitted to us in manuscripts, which, in most cases, do not preserve even the names of the authors. Let me apply this statement more explicitly to the study of literature, in which I suppose all of us here present are particularly interested. Run over in your mind the titles of the volumes published by the Early English Text Society; only occasionally does the name of an author appear, far the larger number are merely "texts," and as "texts" they have been studied, being combed over by the lexicographer for noteworthy survivals of Anglo-Saxon forms and Scandinavian borrowings, and subjected by the philologist to dialect and chronological tests. That this study of the text has brought useful results I would be the last to deny; and yet these poems and treatises were not written to supply material for linguistic exercises —they were written by men who wished to set down their personal thoughts and feelings, or at least the thoughts and feelings of the class or group to which they belonged.

To invest a given text with its original value as a human document it is necessary also to invade the province of history. The methods of historical research are essential in reconstructing background and setting—those circumstances of time and place which interpret the text itself.

It is, if I understand it correctly, for the express purpose of combining in this way the methods of literary and historical research that this Association exists. When it was first organized this society bore the name of the Modern Languages Research

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Association. I do not know the reasons which led to the change of name, but I suspect that "Humanities" was substituted for "Languages" for the sake of broadening the field of its activities. "Languages," it was probably felt, seemed to suggest that it was primarily concerned with linguistics. "Literature," on the other hand, might seem to exclude research in philology. And "Languages and Literature," besides being a formidably cumbersome designation, would leave out of account the employment of the methods and materials of History. The adoption of the term "Humanities," fortunately, recognized all these phases as properly included within the field of our research.

Most important of all, "Humanities" emphasizes the fact that our investigations deal not only with scientific and technical details, but also with human interests, that our ultimate concern is not with the texts but with the man. It is this fact which I wish at this time to impress anew as defining the special programme of an Association such as ours, whose scope is not restricted to technical investigations. In dealing with the documents which have been preserved from the literature of past ages our ultimate endeavour should be to extract their human meaning by entering, as far as may be, into the thought and life of the men who wrote them.

So far as modern literature is concerned, I suppose this proposition would be accepted without argument. But its application to the mediæval period, one may well feel, is confined within such narrow limits as to make it almost negligible. Aside from Chaucer and two or three others, what biographical materials can we hope to recover in regard to English authors during the mediæval period? Even the names of these authors for the most part have perished. But in suggesting this study of the human element in our older literature I have in mind a far broader undertaking than a compilation of literary biography. Even if we were able to attach to the surviving body of Middle English poetry the names of the authors and the dates of composition, this would not tell us all that we wish to know in regard to this literature. These names and dates would be valuable, after all, chiefly for the light which they might throw upon the circumstances and the purpose of the compositions themselves. After discovering when and by whom, we should still ask how and why.

And in many cases it may be possible to throw light upon these matters even though the author's name still remains undisclosed.

The truth of this statement may be made clear by a more particular consideration of certain aspects of mediæval literature. And I choose for the purpose a question in which for several years

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I have felt increasing interest, namely, the contribution made to Middle English literature by the friars.

The historical facts concerning the coming of the Friars to England are well known, and the important influence which they exerted upon religious and social institutions has been pointed out so often that it does not need to be emphasized here. And yet no serious inquiry has been made, so far as I am aware, to estimate the service which they rendered in reviving vernacular literature. When the Dominicans and Franciscans landed in England in 1221 and 1224 they found the common people largely neglected by Church and aristocracy alike. The court of Henry II. had its distinguished circle of poets, but the literature which they produced was written in an alien tongue and was recited before audiences composed entirely of the "high men"—as Robert of Gloucester called them. The monasteries had their profound scholars, but their learned treatises were in Latin. The services of the church were conducted with pomp and ceremony, but small provision was made for the instruction of laymen, and preaching was almost wholly discontinued in the parish churches. The friars immediately addressed themselves to these neglected laymen, and we have abundant record of the enthusiasm with which the common people flocked to hear their preaching. But no one has been able to tell us what they said. Dr. Little, who has done more than anyone else to explore the history of the Franciscans in England, expresses surprise and regret that, although we have numerous examples on the Continent of thirteenth-century sermons by friars, those which they preached in England have not been preserved. It is not strange, perhaps, that for the most part little pains were taken to copy on expensive vellum sermons which were composed for a distinctly popular audience. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that even these have perished as completely as Dr. Little supposes. And I should like to call attention to one or two curious thirteenth-century MSS. written, as I suspect, by friars, which throw interesting light upon their pulpit methods and explain their success in gaining the ear of the people.

Trinity Coll. Camb. MS. 43 contains in its earlier pages treatises in Old French prose intended for the government of some religious house. Among the subjects treated are: the benefits of confession, prayer, the conduct of the chapter and of the refectory. Article 4 in this MS., however, consists of a sermon in English which is altogether different in its character and purpose.

[Trinity Coll. Camb. MS. 43. Art. 4, fol. 24a.]

Lipir lok and tuingling
tiheng & tikeling
opin brest & singing

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þeise mid-outin lesing
arin toknes of horeling.[1]

Ne leue leuedi ne be þi wimpil neuere so ȝelu ne so stroutinde ne þi faire tail so long no so trailende þat tu ne schalt at euin al cuttid bileuin & tu schalt to bedde gon so nakid so þu were [borin].

B(ernardus) Qua in mundo fuero memor ero laborum quos *Christus* sustinuit in predicando fatigacionum in discurrando, vigiliarum in orando, lacrimarum in compatiendo, temptacionum in ieiuniendo. Recordabor & clauorum sputorum colaphorum & hiis similium alioquin requiretur a me sanguis recti que effusum est super terra

Alse longe as i sal liue i þis werld, seit Seint Bernard, i sal þenkin o þe michele suink þat ihesu crist þolede in spelling & tat michele werinesse þat he drei renninde aboutin fro tune to tune & te stronge fondingis þat he hadde of hungir & of meseise in fasting & te longe wakinges þat he wok in bedis bidding þat he bad for sinful folk & te manie soruful teris þat he gret for reunesse of hem þat werin at maleise. And alse i shal vnderstondin his michele sorewin þat he drei in his þrowyng time & te schamefule upbreidingis & te schoffingis & te smerte schourgingis ant te angriful wondis of þe grete nailis & of þe manie opere bittere pines & te sore akinde wondis þat he þolede in hiis fles euere me mai monen & tar onne i sal þenkin. And gif i ne do bitterliche schal it me ben opbroidin a domes dai þe blescede blod of suete ihesu crist þe rite-wis man þat was schad abouen erþe for me

Also cristene man and crestene woman, bote þou ofte þenke o þe longe stronge pines þat ihesu crist godis sone drei for þi foule sinnis & bot þou lete hem for þe loue of him þat gaf his lif & his soule for to deliuere þe of þe grisli deth of helle þat alle werin idempd to. wei-la-wei wei-la-wei harde mai þe grefin agein þat wrethful dai of dom þanne þou salt sen & vnderstondin alle þe pines & te michele maleise þat ihesu crist drei for þi loue in erþe o þe ton half þe. O þe toþer half þe þou schalt sen al rediliche & al opinliche biforn al þe werld alle þe sinnis þat tu hast don ageines his forebode wid þout oupir mid worde oþer mid werke but it be here þoru verrai penance ibeth. þanne mai[s]tu singin wei-la-wei wo-la-wo þat euere were þou borin opir bigetin.

Ak god itot þanne is to late
þanne is te carte atte gate

And fend redi þe to takin Man ware þe proth dolor!

Hauestu nouth herd seid, of seli seli. and seli vnseli. vnseli seli. vnseli vnseli. Et distingue in anglico hoc quadruplex genus hominum:

Mens mala, mors intus, malus actus, mors foris, vsus,
Tumba, puella, puer, lazarus, ista notant.[2]

[1] These verses were printed, together with the paraphrase of the Decalogue in the same MS. at fol. 42, by Professor Max Förster in *Archiv. für das Stud. der neueren Sprachen u. Lit.*, CIV., 302, who also called attention to these English prose homilies.

[2] The author of these Latin lines was Bishop Hildebert of Maine. Alexander Neckam quotes them in his *De Naturis Rerum* (ed. Rolls Series, p. 135).

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A little further on in the same MS. is another sermon in English, which, like the one we have just considered, begins with a quotation from a popular song—probably one which was well known to the audience.

[Trinity Coll. Camb. MS. 43, fol. 42b.]

Atte wrastlinge mi lemman i ches
and atte ston kasting i him for-les.

Legimus in ewangelio m[at]t. xii: Quia de omni uerbo occioso quod locuti fuerunt homines reddent rationem de eo in die iudicii. Et nos cum simus emulatores spirituum ad edificacionem ecclesie secundum apostolum corrin. ix. Ideo debemus errantes reprimere, vanitatem ad ueritatem reducere & quod foris ostendit ociosa leuitate niti ut ad edificacionem animarum commutetur.

Þe grace of ure louerd ihu crist & te helpe of ure Lauedi seinte Þe milde be mid us nu & eueremore. Mi leue frend, wilde wimmen & gol me[n][1] i mi contereie wan he gon o Þe ring, among manie opere songis Þat litil ben wort Þat tei singin so sein Þei Þus: Atte wrastling mi leman, etc. & we findin iwritin in a bok Þat te maister maude Þat neuere ne lei, Þat is i Þe holi gospel Þat suete ihu crist spak, Þere is iwritin Þat of eueri idel word Þat men spekin i Þis werld men sal giuen andsuere offe & raison o domis dai. & uue men of religiun Þat owen to helpe Iou to Þe soule mid worde & mid werke after oure mite owin to snibben sinne & vndernime folie. & hem Þat ben out of godis lore strengÞin us to bringin hem agein and idele wordes tornen to note of saule, for litlike nis no folie ifundin Þat sum wisdom nis bundin inne, wo-so kouÞe it wel ut bringin.

Atte wrastlinge, *ut supra*. Nu mon we understondin i Þeise wordis to manere of folk. Þe ton is Þat bleÞeliche & mid suet herte herin godis word & mid bisinesse ben abutin to chesin ihu crist here saule lemman, Þat dere had a-bout here loue mid blodi wondis & mid deth on rode, and chesin him atte wrastlinge as i er seide.

Wrastlinge is a manere of feiteinge. & sikirlike ne comid no man to his loue ne to his blisse but he be god champiun & manlike feite agein hise 3 fomen. Þo ben Þe deuel of helle, his owene sinfule fles, and tre Þecuvenant to werld. & he Þat tus don mouen sein Þe forme word of ure songe, "Atte wrastlinge."

Þe toÞer word is tis: "And atte ston kasting i him forles." Bi Þe ston is vnderstondin Þe harde harte of man & of womman Þat lat in godis word atte ton ere & vt atte toÞir. sumbrin & sleÞin wan men it spekin no suetnesse Þer men findin, nout sauouret hem Þat te prechur spekit but drie comin & drie gon mid outin wetnesse of godis grace. I-wis ittis to dredin liste sum suart sinne of wikke liflode haue a-blend hem herte eien. Agein suilke men wid stonene herte speked seint Dauid godis prophet & seid i Þe sauter: Hodie si uocem domini

[1] *Cf.* "gole men" (=wanton men) in *Old. Eng. Hom.*, 2nd Ser., E.E.T.S., p. 31, l. 5.

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audiere noli obdurari cor[da] v[estra]. I halse Iou and bidde Iou o godis name, he seit, þat gif men preche Iou godis word þat no man ne make his herte hard tare ageines.

Ibi nota. Quoniam illorum obdurata sunt corda qui ad uerba Xpi de penis contumacia uel electarum leticia promittentia a rigore malicie non flectuntur.

Wiche ben harde hertis? sikirliche þo þat herein in holi prechinge þe schendchipe & te peine of helle þat te forlorene sculen soffrin. & on oþir halfe þe mirþe & te Ioie of heueriche blisse þat godis chosene frend scullen hauen aftir þis wrechede werld. & for al þis liuen in here flescis lustis & in here stinkinde sinnis, ne for godis kalling ne for his manacing hem, ne schriuen ne god dredin no vnneþis so weilauuey atte scharpe deteis timppe.

Þeise, bel ami, ben harde hertis; þeise ben nout of godis meine, for he ne do nouth godis commaundement. þeise mester men hauen forloren god te suete. He mouuen sein þe laste word of ure sauue: Atte ston casting i him forles. for suich hard herte me him forlest. Biseche we þanne him i wos name we ben here i-gadered þat he for his godhed reue us tis harde herte & giue uus suet & loueliche herte his word forto herin to his worchipe & us to note & to gode of lif and of saule and tat it so be sei ich of us par charite a pater noster and an Aue Marie.

It is clear that the preacher of this sermon was deliberately adopting sensational methods in order to gain the attention of his audience,[1] and there is little doubt that he succeeded.

Directly following the sermon one finds also a paraphrase of the Ten Commandments in English rimes—another evidence that the instruction of laymen was one or the purposes which the compiler of this MS. had in mind. Pointing in the same direction is the occurrence on a later page (fol. 73b) of the English rimes on the Signs of Death and the *Memento Mori* theme.

These considerations suggested to me the strong probability that the MS. in question was compiled in a convent of friars, and that in the two English sermons we have examples of actual sermons delivered by the friars before congregations of common folk. Notice in particular that the preacher in the second sermon speaks of the song as sung "in my country" as though his home was not the place where the sermon was delivered. This certainly suggests the itinerant preacher and so fits perfectly with what we know of the practices of the friars.

Thus far all the evidence of the MS. seemed consistent with my hypothesis. But a difficulty presented itself when I noticed

[1] St. Francis himself once took a couplet from an Italian secular song as the text for a sermon (see P. Sabatier, *Vie de St. François d'Assise*, ed. 1894, p. 195), although in this case it was not necessary to employ such violence to force the lines to serve a religious purpose.

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that elsewhere the MS. included a Latin treatise on the Rule of St. Augustine. This difficulty, however, disappears when one remembers that by its original charter the Order of St. Dominic was established as a branch of the Augustinian Rule. The treatise on the Rule of St. Augustine is not, therefore, inconsistent with the supposition that this MS. belonged to a convent of friars. Indeed, it is distinctly useful as indicating that the convent in question was a house of Dominicans rather than of Franciscans.

The other MS. to which I wish to call attention is likewise preserved in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. From a literary point of view MS. 323 is of much greater importance than MS. 43, for it includes a far larger amount of Middle English material. Indeed, this MS. preserves one of the largest collections of Middle English religious verse which has come down to us from the thirteenth century, including the Song of Judas, which has been designated the earliest English ballad. It is impossible here —and indeed unnecessary—even to list the contents of the volume. Much of the material which it contains was clearly intended for pulpit use. One of the pieces is a metrical homily pure and simple, as the opening lines show:

Yc ou rede ye sitten stille
& herknet wel wid gode wille
Of godes wordes ant is werkes
Boþe þis lewede & þis clerkes
for godes children wollet scechen
euer to heren of godes spechen

Another sermon, evidently designed for a popular audience, begins by quoting eight lines from a French song:

Bele alis matyn se leva
Sun cors vesta & appara
en vn vergier sen entra
cync florettes i troua
vne chapelette feit en ha. Etc.

The preacher then proceeds to expound the song, extracting from it religious and moral exhortation. One is reminded of the method of the friar who began his sermon with the lines of the dance song. The *Bele alis* sermon, however, occurs also in other MSS.[1]—both in England and in France—and probably was merely

[1] This sermon has been printed by Thomas Wright (*Altdeutsche Blätter*, II., 143) from MS. Arundel 292, where it is ascribed to Archbishop Stephen Langton. Still other MSS. are cited by A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La Chaire française au Moyen Age*, 2nd ed., pp. 93-95, who argues that the author of the sermon was French instead of Anglo-

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appropriated by the compiler of the Trinity College MS., who must, nevertheless, have intended to add it to his own repertory. The tone of the pieces in this MS. suits well in general with the notion that it was a friar's compilation; there is repeated stress on the virtue of alms-giving:

bisete þine ponevis sire eode
þeng on pore monnis neode

and also exhortations to thrift:

Dele al þi goid pouere þad habbit neode
Quite dettes & scrive of sinful deode.

An exemplum contained in this MS. may perhaps afford a definite clue to the order to which the author belonged. The story is that of the incestuous daughter who killed in succession her mother and her father—the plot of that curious fourteenth-century play, *Dux Moraud*. By chance she heard a sermon one day in which it was declared that however great one's sin one could be restored by penitence:

"Mulier illa accessit ad eundem predicatorem & penitenciam peciit."

The predicator enjoined her to found a chapel in honor of the Virgin and therein to hear Mass daily. One day, while she was hearing Mass, she died through sorrow for her sin:

"Et angelus domini nunciauit predicatori quod saluata fuit anima illius mulieris. & predicator ille moriebatur pre gaudio."

In the climax of the story, it will be observed, the *predicator* figures rather than the sinner. It should be noted also that in the thirteenth century the term *predicator* was most frequently used with special reference to the Dominicans, the Ordo fratrum prædicantium.

Both of these Trinity College MSS., if my interpretation is accepted, illustrate the pulpit repertory of the Dominicans. If time served, it would be easy to present similar evidence in the case of the Franciscans. I should like, for example, to discuss the commonplace book which Friar John Grimston compiled in 1372 for homiletic purposes. The material in this book is classified under 149 headings alphabetically arranged. The bulk

Norman. *Cf.* the lines "Quant Aeliz fu levee," etc., quoted by Jacques de Vitry (No. CCLXXIII.) in an exemplum of the sister of St. Bernard, and see also Dr. Crane's notes on this exemplum (*Ex. of Jac. de Vitry*, F.L.S., p. 253).

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of the material, it is true, is in Latin, but there is a surprising amount of English; and the latter, it is interesting to observe, is always in verse. In fact, the conclusion to which one is led after examining the manuscript material is that it was a common practice of the friars to make liberal use of vernacular verse in seasoning their sermons to "lewed men." Indeed, Wyclif in his denunciation of the friars offers valuable testimony that in his day they still continued to embellish their preaching by the use of rimes:

"For freres in her prechinge fordon prechinge of Crist, and prechen lesyngus and japes plesynge to þe peple; and if þei touche a worde þat is in Cristis lawe, þei cutten it so, and reven it fro fowrme of Goddis wordes, þat þe peple schal not wite what þis word menes. And so þes freres faren wiþ þe worde of Goddis lawe worse þen fendus turmentours faren wiþ þer clopis. For þei docken Goddis word, and tateren it bi þer rimes, þat þe fowrme þat Crist ȝaf it is hidde by ypocrisie."

Much further research is needed to determine the nature and extent of the contribution which the friars made to English verse. When one considers that the half-century which followed the arrival of the friars in England was marked by the appearance of a very considerable body of religious verse in the vernacular—homilies, lives of the saints, translations of Latin hymns, and scriptural paraphrases—one suspects that they were responsible for a large share of this instructive and devotional poetry. At all events, the recognition of the use which they made of English rimes in their sermons enables us to understand more clearly than before the enthusiasm with which "lewed" men flocked to hear their preaching.

I fear that my own enthusiasm over the friars has extended disproportionately what was intended simply to illustrate my theme. If so, it shows that even those who strive to impress the human aspects of literature are not free from the perils of over-specialization.

But this digression after all will have served the purpose which I had in view if it succeeds in emphasizing the fact that mediæval literature, as well as that of the present, has its human interests. It not only preserves for us linguistic forms of a bygone age, but expresses the thoughts and feelings of the men who lived in that age. The final goal of our research should be not only to discover the texts, but to reveal the men who wrote them. In the last analysis our problem is to understand and interpret the life of man.

This you, no doubt, are saying to yourselves, may be good philosophy, but it does not sound much like research.

I am not sure that it is not both.

Is there any good reason why the historical and philological

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researcher should gaze steadfastly upon the ground—like the man with the rake in *Pilgrim's Progress*—and refuse to raise his eyes to behold the philosophical vision?

Literature is something more than language, poetry is more than metre, and the search for truth is more than bibliography; and it is precisely on this account—because we are conscious of the underlying and permanent significance of humanity itself—that we are willing to undertake the drudgery which research in any field of knowledge necessarily involves.

In the definition which I quoted at the beginning of these remarks, the humanities were sharply distinguished from the physical sciences. This distinction, however, is convenient rather than absolute. Considered in the largest sense, the physical sciences and the humanities may be said to travel on converging paths toward the same ultimate goal. It was the father of modern science who declared: "The aim of all science is to endow the condition and life of man with new powers or works, or to extend more widely the limits of the power and greatness of man." Do not we who are workers in the field of the humanities lift our eyes to the same horizon as we set ourselves to extend the limits of our understanding of man's mind and heart?

CARLETON BROWN.

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QUARTERLY NOTES

PRESIDENT, 1928-29

PROFESSOR LEVIN L. SCHÜCKING, of the University of Leipzig, has been elected President of the Association for the academic year 1928-29. The new President is no stranger to members of the Association; for he has rendered valiant help in past years with the Bibliography of English Language and Literature, and has, besides this, contributed frequent articles on post-war Germany to the English press. He has been in England during the summer vacation, has been in close touch with the Association, and was one of the numerous distinguished visitors present at the Annual Meeting held at University College, London, on June 30 last. It is an honour for the Association to welcome so distinguished a scholar to its Presidential Chair, and there is also cause for hope that the coming year may see a large accession to our membership from Germany.

It is with great pleasure and pride that we record the double honour conferred upon Professor J. G. Robertson, our Chairman of Committee and Editor of the *Modern Language Review*. Both the Universities of Manchester and Dublin chose the summer of 1928 to award Professor Robertson the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. None better than members of the Modern Humanities Research Association know how long and how unselfishly our Chairman has laboured for the cause for which it stands. He has been Editor of the *Review* since its foundation, and is the person principally responsible for the high esteem in which it is held at home and abroad.

The Bibliography of English Language and Literature for 1927, edited by Miss D. Everett, is passing through the press as these lines are written, and will be available at the beginning of October. It may be obtained by members through the Hon. Treasurer for 3s. 6d. post free, and by non-members through any bookseller for 6s. 6d. Subscribers will note this year that the Bibliography is bound more durably than in the past, at the request of a large number of subscribers and at the suggestion of many reviewers. It is hoped that the change will be appreciated, the more so since it is accompanied by no appreciable change in price. The growing success of the Bibliography with each issue is a cause

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for congratulation to all concerned. It is unnecessary for us to add that no serious student of English language and literature should be without it.

At the Annnal Meeting the following members were elected to the Committee of the Association for 1928-29: Miss E. E. Welsford, Professor W. E. Collinson, and Mr. W. Atkinson. At the same meeting Miss M. E. Seaton and Miss M. S. Serjeantson were invited to become joint-editors of the Bibliography, Miss Everett having resigned owing to stress of other work. The Committee and the Association as a whole are most grateful to Miss Paues and Miss Everett for the excellent work which they have done in building up the Bibliography, both as to circulation and as to merit.

The Hon. Treasurer wishes to remind members, other than life members, that the subscription for 1928-29 becomes payable on October 1, 1928. When paying their annual subscription, many members like to remit also the reduced advance subscription of 15s. which entitles them to the *Modern Language Review* for 1929, together with the subscription to the Bibliography. With regard to the last-named item, we are always anxious to remind subscribers that their names may be placed, at their request, on the permanent list, in which case they receive their copy of the Bibliography immediately on its publication. This list has grown greatly during the last few years, and stands now at over 200.

INQUIRIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MR. H. M. MARCH, 1831 Yale Station, New Haven, Conn., U.S.A., is engaged in research on the life and works of Frédéric Soulié (1800-1847) and his relations to the romantic movement in France. He would be glad to hear from anyone interested in this subject.

Mr. J. DeLancey Ferguson, of the Ohio Wesleyan University, U.S.A., is preparing a new edition of Robert Burns' Letters, re-edited from the original manuscripts. He will be grateful if anyone who knows of such manuscripts in private hands, or in the smaller public collections outside the "Burns country," will write to him in care of the Oxford University Press, Warwick Square, London, E.C. 4, so that he may make arrangements to do the necessary collating.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Cambridge Public Library Record. Edited by W. A. Fenton, M.A., Borough Librarian. Vol. ii., No. 5. June, 1928.

English Influence on Japanese. By Sanki Ichikawa (Studies in English Literature). Vol. viii., No. 2. April, 1928.

The Variant Issues of Shakespeare's Second Folio and *Milton's First Published English Poem: A Bibliographical Problem.* By Robert Metcalf Smith, Ph.D. (Lehigh University Publications). Vol. ii., No. 3. March, 1928.

Philological Quarterly. Vol. vii., No. 2. April, 1928.

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America. Edited by Carleton Brown. Vol. xliii., No. 1. March, 1928.

Publications of the Modern Language Association of America. Edited by Carleton Brown. Vol. xliii., No. 2. June, 1928.

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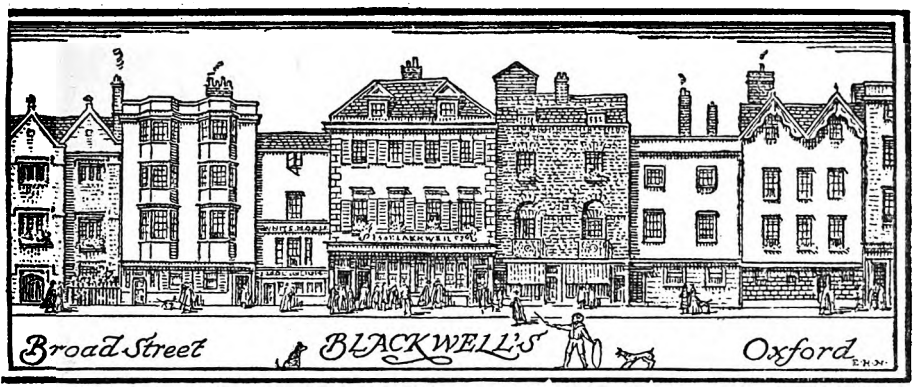

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